

## News Conference Talk—Sept 5, 2018. Salt Lake City

2 ½ years ago, for the first time I expressed my concerns to my stake president. I told him that I didn't think that our youth interview practice was appropriate. On that distant occasion I was still clueless about the dangers of our interviews. I still had no idea of the probing sexual nature of questions that were being asked. I was not aware that 4 of my children had been victims. I was in a bubble of ignorance to the fact that countless children had been horribly harmed.

2 ½ years are now under the bridge. I've spent countless hours, shed countless tears, and am in the process of draining my retirement account to fund my efforts. I'm no longer clueless of the horrific damage that our children have suffered. Some have committed suicide. We have earned the infamous title of the teen suicide capital of the country. Some children were raped or sexually abused by priesthood leaders including bishops. Countless children have been shamed into self-loathing, ruining their childhoods. Many carrying self-hatred into adulthood.

This behavior by congregational leaders is abhorrent to the world. It should be abhorrent to all Mormons.

Ever since October 31st, 2017 I have taken the outspoken route to protect our children from evil.

For the longest time the church gave no response. One week ago, their official rejoinder was delivered to my home by two long-standing friends. A summons to a Church tribunal where my membership will be put on trial.

With this action they have clearly shown its colors. Rather than standing for protecting children, they ONLY stand to protect the institution. Not the children.

Here are the charges against me:

1. That I encouraged others to vote opposed to church leaders.
2. I organized more than one public "action" that expressed opposition to the Church or its leaders.

Rather than standing for protecting the children they only stand for protecting this institution - Not children.

They have called a court to protect a cold, heartless, money making machine of an institution.

I am not going to let them get away with this dodgy distraction from what REALLY matters. The world is now watching. The world knows what this is all about. They see through the emperor's invisible clothes. The human rights of Mormon children are

being squared off against the rights of a corporation to take children all alone behind closed doors and ask them sexually explicit questions.

So, what is the REAL purpose of this court?

The institution has given me 45 minutes to state my case. A disrespectfully short amount of time. Disrespectful to the children. And this is only one element that has turned this “sacred tribunal” into a kangaroo court. During those 45 minutes I will not be defending my membership. I have been willing to sacrifice my membership from the get-go for the REAL purpose of this movement. The REAL purpose of the disciplinary council will be to put the institution on trial. That is their stated purpose anyway. So, for 45 minutes I’ll make the children’s case against the Goliath of the Mormon institution.

Even inside its own walls, the Church is starting to lose the battle to protect their pernicious policy. Here are 3 recent reports from the front lines inside the church:

1. Two of my children had bishop interviews tonight. Both were attended by a parent. There were no sexually explicit questions. This is a win. The prophet may not be influenced by grass roots efforts and public opinion, but real people are, and these changes in our home wouldn't have happened without Protect LDS Children. Thank you to everyone who has supported this movement.
2. I attended my daughter’s recent ‘annual’ interview. Our bishop is a great guy, but I’m breaking that cycle of teaching the kids it’s ok to be alone with church leaders that made me go.
3. Our bishop has sent out a ward-wide email that a parent is required to attend all youth interviews. He’s a great Bishop.

The church has already totally lost the battle in society at large. And society is not going to turn back on its march to protect our little ones.

Yesterday, I received this long message from a Church member.

“I am taking my recertification training as a physician and one of our training is on mandated reporting of sexual abuse. Got me thinking. I called the sexual abuse reporting hotline.

I asked them if I was aware that there was a man taking kids behind closed doors and interrogating them about sex - would that be a reportable event?

The answer: yes.

What if their parents consented to take them - like to a catholic priest?

The answer: then the parents would be considered in neglect.”

He goes on:

"In Massachusetts, if you were to call their child abuse hotline and tell them that a man was taking a kid in private and asking them probing sexual questions about their masturbation, pornography and sexual activities - they would start an investigation.

If you told them it was a catholic priest who was doing it - they would be even more interested in investigating it.

If you told them it was a Mormon Bishop who was doing it - they would say it makes no difference.

If you told them that it was done with the consent of the parents - they would say that the parents might need to be investigated for negligence in knowingly subjecting their children to such a practice.

What the church subjects our children to is abusive. When more parents start waking up to that fact - people are going to start reporting the local bishops for conducting these interviews and then state authorities will take action.

Many states have mandatory reporting for certain professionals, like teachers, doctors and law enforcement - but there are also 18 states in which every individual is a mandatory reporter. That means that if there is someone who knows and understands that these interview are abusive in one of these states - they are legally obligated to report that these men - these lay bishops - are engaged in these inappropriate and abusive acts and they will be investigated.

Many Mormon Bishops are professionals. Dentists, doctors or attorneys - and they are, themselves subject to professional licensing in order to practice. They are not only held to professional standards of ethical and accountable behavior within the confines of their offices - but if they are reported to engage in inappropriate and abusive acts with a child, they may be subject to investigation by their professional licensing boards.

These good men are being put at risk in their professions by the policies of the church continuing to require them to conduct interviews which are immoral, unethical and abusive.

The writing is on the wall. These practices will not be tolerated by a society that understands the harm and danger in allowing such things to be normalized and accepted. ProtectLDSChildren has worked to educate and inform members and nonmembers alike of the clear and present danger posed by these interviews and now that people are informed they are not going to sit back and do nothing.

Please - if you are a Bishop - make a local policy decision for your ward that you will never meet one on one with a child and you will never ask sexual questions. Print it in the ward bulletin. Hold a special joint relief society and priesthood meeting and explain it.

If you are reprov'd or called to repent by your stake or area leaders - explain your decision to them. You are protecting the children as well as your own livelihood, reputation and standing in the community. If they insist that you start conducting abusive and inappropriate interviews, then politely resign from your calling.

The gloves are off now that we have seen the devastating effects of our own policies. These things cannot stand. The world sees them for what they are and the leaders of this institution who continue to consult their PR agents instead of consulting experts in child safety - will be held accountable for their failure to act - unless...

unless they listen to the voices of the victims, the warnings of the mental health professionals and the guidance of those who are authorities in child protection - and make the changes which are so obviously needful at this time."

I'm going to end with a scripture passage found in D&C 135 verse 4.

In 1844, Joseph Smith was summoned to surrender himself at Carthage jail, he made the decision to submit and then penned these famous words. "I go as a lamb to the slaughter. I am calm as a summer's morning."

As for me, I am no Joseph Smith. I am not going anywhere as a lamb. I've taken off the sheep's clothing.

"I go as a LION to the slaughter. Ready to ROAR for the children on this coming Sunday's summer morning."